



Big City Research

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Tackling big city research may appear to be an overwhelming process due to the size of the population and the amount of records which are produced. However, a steady and persistent approach to this type of research can yield wonderful results.

OVERVIEW

Largest U.S. Cities in 1790

- New York City (NY) had 33,131 residents
- Philadelphia (PA) had 28,522
- Boston (MA) had 18,320
- Charleston (SC) had 16,359
- Baltimore (MD) had 13,503

Largest U.S. Cities in 1900

- New York City (NY) with 3,437,202
- Chicago (IL) with 1,698,575
- Philadelphia (PA) with 1,293,697
- St. Louis (MO) with 575,238
- Boston (MA) with 560,892

HAZARDS OF CITY RESEARCH:

- Time consuming to search numerous records
- Many individuals missed in records
- A renting population moves more frequently
- Recently arrived in the country
- Wide variety of trades, careers, wealth
- Less likely to have neighbors who are relatives
- Variety of religious affiliations
- More people were overlooked in vital records

RECORDS TO USE:

- Use Federal and State Census Records
- Birth, Marriage and Death records whenever available
- Probate and estate records
- City Directories

- Military Records

CITY DIRECTORIES:

- Alphabetical listings of residents
- Street Guides
- Occupations
- Religion Listings

MAPS

- Library of Congress
- Sanborn Insurance Maps
- New York Public Library
- ProQuest: Historic Map Works
- Local Libraries

WEB SITES THAT HELP:

- One Step, steve.morse.org
- Google Maps
- Ancestry.com for their city directories
- Newspapers
 - news.google.com/newspapers
 - Genealogy Bank
 - Newspaper Archives
 - newspapers.com